DAVID's Repentance;

Or, The True Penitent Bewailing his Sins.

Wherein a Christian may learn how to humble himself before GOD, and beg Pardon and Mercy for his manifold Transgressions, and lay hold on the Meritorious Death & Passion of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the Saving of his Soul: As also to avoid Falling in Despair, & Comforts in Affliction. With a Penitent Prayer of a Returning Sinner.

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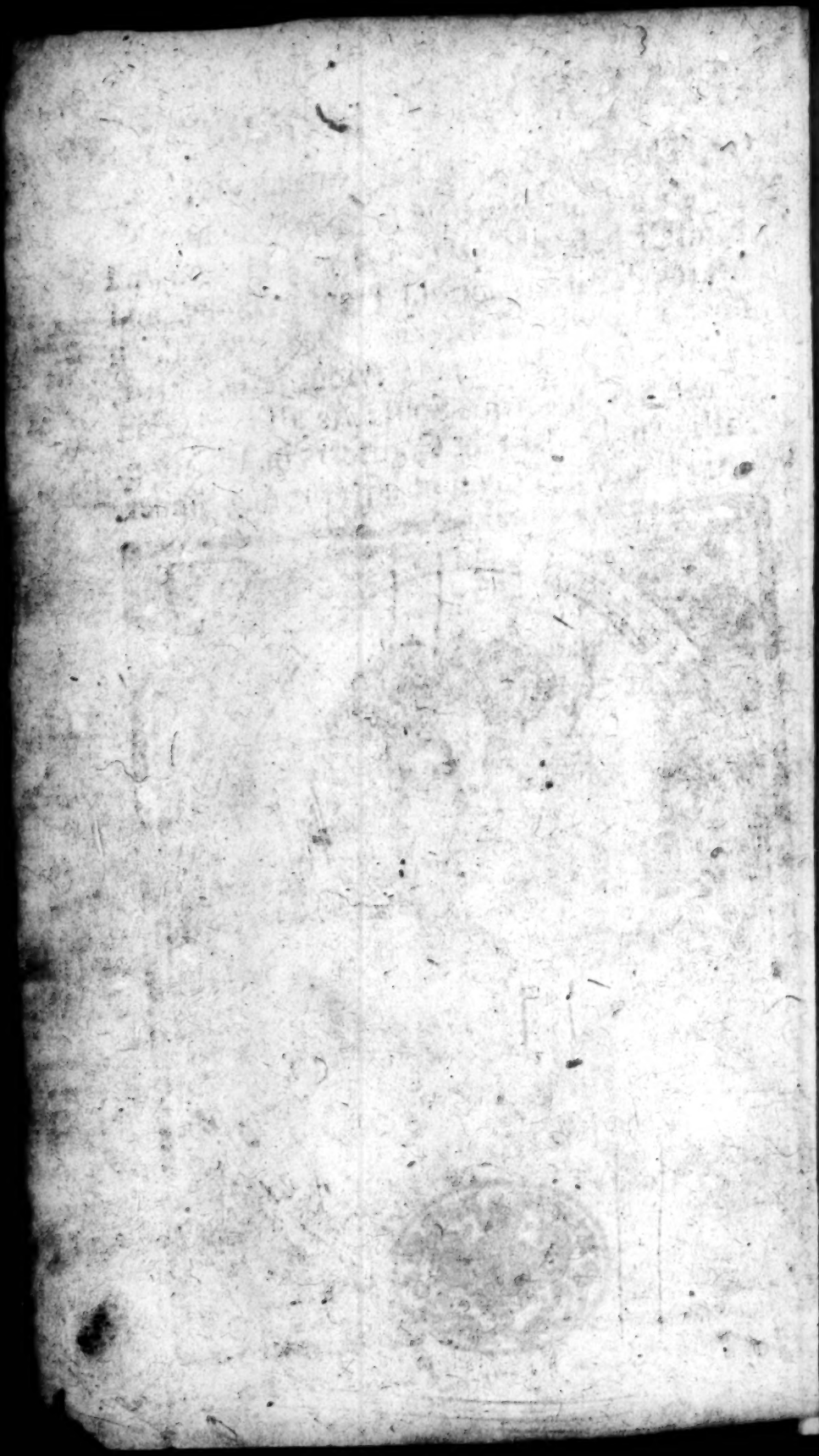

David's REPENTANCE: Or, The True PENITENT.

Pſalm CII. 1, 2.

Hear my Prayer, O Lord, and let my Cry come unto thee: Hide not thy Face from me, when I am in trouble.

WE find holy *David*, though a King and a Prophet; and what might yet more redound to his worthineſs, a Man choſen after God's own Heart, that is ſuch a one as the Almighty, who diſpoſes of things in Heaven and Earth, could wiſh, or did think fit to be ſeated on the Throne of *Iſrael*, and govern his choſen People, frequently complaining of his Sins, and bewailing his Failings, as being very ſenſible of his own Imperfections, whereby even good Chriſtians may learn not to bear themſelves on the Wings of Preſumption, for God loveth the humble and contrite Spirit, and has promiſed not to turn away his Ears from them, but favourably to grant their Petitions, and draw them to himſelf with the Cords of his Love.

Lord, who ſhall dwell (ſays the holy Prophet) *in thy Tabernacle? Or who ſhall reſt upon thy holy Hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt Life, and doth the thing which is right, and ſpeaketh the Truth from his Heart. He that ſetteth not himſelf, but is lowly in his own Eyes, and maketh much of them that feareth the Lord,* Pſal 51. 1, 2, 3. In all his Afflictions we find this holy Man comforting himſelf in the Rock of his Defence, with an unſhaken Confidence. *I have* (ſays he) *ſet God always before me, for he is on my right hand; therefore I ſhall not fall. Wherefore my Heart was glad, and my Glory rejoyced, my Fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope,* &c. Pſal. 16. 2, 10. When he was perſecuted unjuſtly by *Saul*, whoſe Kingdom he had delivered from the inſulting Philiſtines, by overthrowing the great *Goliah* their Champion; and at many times routing their Armies, he patiently ſuffered it, as knowing it was an Affliction to humble him, and let him know that he was but Duſt, and ſubject to Sorrows and Calamities: he ſtudied no Revenge for *Saul*'s Ingratitude, no, nor to free himſelf from Danger, though opportunity offer'd, as if it had been marked out by Providence; but he waited patiently till by other hands he was freed from the Danger that daily threatned, and which he had ſo narrowly eſcaped, tho' his very Name in the Hebrew ſignifieth, *The Beloved of God.* By which example a good Chriſtian may learn to bear patiently any

Croſſes

Croſſes without repining, waiting God's Leiſure, which is ever the beſt, and turneth to the ſureſt Advantage; for though his fears was great, as himſelf confeſſes, and many Snares were laid to entrap him, even by thoſe he thought he might have repoſed Confidence in; as appears, when he ſaid, There was but a ſtep between him and Death; and that *Saul* hunted after him, as a Partridge, and made him flie from Mountain to Mountain; inſomuch that he ſometimes thought he ſhould one day or other periſh by the Hand of *Saul*, as we find it in the 1ſt of *Samuel*, the 20th, and the 2d, *&c.* When he came to Reign as King by God's Appointment, who had bowed the Hearts of the People, his chief care was to eſtabliſh Religion, and his Thoughts were wholy taken up to build a Houſe to the Lord, had it not been forbidden him, and appointed to be done in his Son's Days, referring all his worthy Actions to the building up the People in true Religion; and if we will be truly beloved, all our Actions muſt have this End: Namely, to advance the Glory of God in his Temple, to promote Chriſt's Kingdom. *David* had many other Enemies beſide *Saul.* ſo that the 18th Pſalm is a Thankſgiving to God for delivering him from them; there he ſays, *I will love thee, O Lord, my ſtrength: The Lord is my ſtrong Rock, and my Defence, Saviour, and my God, and my Might, in whom I will truſt, my Buckler and the Horn alſo of my Salvation*

and

and Refuge, I will call on the Lord who is worthy to be praiſed; ſo ſhall I be ſafe from my Enemies. The Sorrows of Death compaſſed me, and the Overflowings of Ungodlineſs made me afraid, the Pains of Hell came about me, and the ſnares of Death overtook me in my trouble. I will call upon the Lord, and complain unto my God; ſo ſhall he hear my voice out of his holy Temple, and my complaint ſhall come before him, it ſhall enter even into his Ears, Pſal. 18. verſ. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. God would not have his Afflictions eaſie, becauſe the Comfort & Conſolation in overcoming them ſhould be ſweeter; and ſeeing he was beloved of God, and yet afflicted, Men thence may learn not too much to rely on worldly Happineſs, and plenty of outward means in this Life, but thirſt after the Felicity of the World to come: He had Enemies abroad, and ſome Enemies at home, as *Adonijah* and *Abſalom*, &c. and for this cauſe we find him complaining in the 86 Pſalm, *viz.* Bow down thine Ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and in miſery; preſerve thou my Soul, for I am holy; my God ſave thy Servant that putteth his truſt in thee; be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I will call daily upon thee; comfort the Soul of thy Servant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul; for thou Lord art good and gracious, and of great Mercy to all them that call upon thee; and ſo goes on to the end of the Pſalm, with Supplications for Deliverance

and

and Protection; and the conſideration of this is of great uſe to every good Man and Woman, in their private Lives and Converſations

Beſides theſe two outward Afflictions by others, he had the Misfortune to bring a great one upon himſelf, by being enſnared with the Beauty of *Uriah*'s Wife, which made him covet her; and to hide or colour the Shame, cauſed him to be killed by the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*; God's purpoſe however, in permitting theſe great Offences in the Godly, is wonderful; for by the riſing and falling again of them, others who precipitate and run headlong into ſuch Temptations, may be ſtayed and reſtrained from Deſpair, by the comfortable Rays of God's infinite Mercy towards great Sinners; but at the ſame time they are no warrant to run into preſumptious aud wilful Sins, leaſt the high provocation fix God's Juſtice and Indignation upon us, to our final Deſtruction.

In Teſtimony of *David*'s Repentance for the Sins of Murther and Adultery, he ſung the 51ſt Pſalm, viz. *Have mercy upon me after thy great Goodneſs, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies do away mine offences: Waſh me throughly from my Wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my Sins: For I acknowledge my faults, and my Sins is ever before me. Againſt thee only have I ſinned, aud done this evil in thy ſight, that thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſaying, and clear when thou jndgeſt. Behold I was ſhapen*

in

in wickedneſs, and in Sin hath my Mother conceived me: But lo, thou requireſt truth in the inward parts, and ſhalt make me to underſtand wiſdom ſecretly. Thou ſhalt purge me with Hyſop, and I ſhall be clean; thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow: Thou ſhalt make me hear of joy and gladneſs, that the bones that thou haſt broken may rejoice. Turn thy Face from my ſins; and put out all my tranſgreſſions. Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me: And ſo he goes on to the end, bewailing his failings and miſdeeds: But theſe Failings, I ſay, are no warrant for any Man to do the like; but from hence ariſeth a wonderful comfort to the Sinner that hath tranſgreſs'd of Infirmity, for thence he may be excited to repent, to beg for Pardon, to hope for Forgiveneſs, and ſo may be free from Deſperation. If *David* being ſo glorious in Conqueſts and in other Graces, had not thus tranſgreſſed, he would perhaps have born himſelf too high, but the making a right uſe of God's pardoning his Sins & great Offences, through Repentance was thereby humbled and became more ſtudious to keep the Commandments of his Maker, who had raiſed him from keeping of Sheep upon the Mountains, to the Throne, there to be the Shepherd and Ruler of a mighty Nation; and as his Sins were great, his Repentance was no leſs, for he often watereth his Couch with Tears, as himſelf confeſſeth; and having preſumed

sumed to number the People, which appeared, as if he put confidence in the Arm of Flesh, when God had made him the mighty Conqueror, he offered his Life for an Expiation of that Sin, to turn away God's Anger from the People, and stay the Plague that destroy'd them by heaps. The Godly care of this great Prophet was in most cases very strict, to obey God, and follow his guidance, as appears by his often consulting, in doubtful cases, with the Oracle, as we find he did, 1 *Sam.* 22. 14. as had been done formerly in weighty Businesses of State, and all his Life long provided for the good of his People, he was merciful to a miracle, in sparing *Shimei*, who had cursed and reviled him in his flight from *Jerusalem*, before his Son *Absalom*, his being kind to the Posterity of *Saul*, and forgiving many that had been his Enemies, by which we may learn that Mercy and Forgiveness extended to our Fellow-Creatures, is of no small importance in the sight of God, who looks that if we expect to be forgiven, we must forgive one another; for what can be a greater Impiety, than to ask Forgiveness of God, when at the same time we have Malice or Design, or perhaps are persecuting our Brethren.

David's Faith was great, for he was not only confident of the fulfilling of the Promiſe in ſending the true *Meſſiah* to redeem the People, but with a full Aſſurance foretels his glorious Reſurrection, and comforts and rejoices himſelf in ſo unconceiveable a Bleſſing, when he thus expoſtulates with the Almighty, viz. *For why thou ſhalt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor ſuffer thy holy one to ſee corruption. Thou ſhalt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy right Hand are pleaſures for evermore,* Pſal. 16. 10, 11. And in many Places we find him ſo raviſh'd in contemplating the Goodneſs of God towards him, that his Tongue not being able ſufficiently to expreſs himſelf, he calls all the Creatures to aſſiſt him in praiſing and magnifying their Maker and Preſerver, running into Extaſies and Raptures of Divine Love, till he is carried away in a Torrent of Joy and Delight, confeſſing nothing more delighted him than the Law of God, *viz. My Delight,* ſays he, *is to do thy Law*; and confeſſes he was exceednigly pleaſed, when heard the People ſay. *Come let us go up to the Houſe of God,* &c. And when the Ark was brought up from the Houſe where it had reſted, ſince its being ſent back by the *Philiſtines,* his Joy appeared even to Extravagancy, by dancing before it.

And

And ſo great an Abhorrence he had for Wickedneſs, and Love for ſacred Things, that although he was a King, and liv'd in great Splendor, he rather deſired to be a Door-keeper, the meaneſt Office in the Houſe of the Lord, than to dwell in the Tents, or as the Hebrew renders it, Palaces of Wickedneſs: Earthly Glory was not his Aim, but incorruptible Glory in the Higheſt Heavens; he conſidered the Promiſe of God, That out of his Loins ſhould come the *Meſſiah* according to the Fleſh, that is, from his own Stock and Lineage, that ſhould redeem the *Iſrael* of God, and be the Bleſſing of all Nations; wherefore his Joy was encreaſed, and his Thoughts were often driven into Raptures and Extaſies; when he ſeriouſly meditated the Glory of the KING of Saints, which he called his Lord, ſaying, *The Lord ſaith unto my Lord, Sit thou on my Right-hand, till I make thy Foes thy Foot-ſtool*, &c.

Thus good Men, like the holy Prophet, have, for the moſt part, Calms in their Souls, and carry a ſecret Joy as an earneſt of Heaven, aud that eternal Felicity they are deſtined to partake of in the World to come, thinking all Things on this ſide far too ſcanty to bound the Deſires of the Soul, which indeed can be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than God that gave it, and its Nature

is ever desirous to ascend to the Fountain of Life and Immortality, from whence it came. This great Patriarch expresses no less by the many Raptures he often expressed his longing Desires by, and passionately coveted to know what in full, that on Earth he could know but in part, as from a great Distance we behold the Sun, which though it appears but small to us, is of a far vaster bigness than the Earth. God gives us here so much as is sufficient to be known; he gives us a Direction to eternal Joy, and a Prospect of what it is, as holy *David* saith, If we keep his Commandments, we may expect through his infinite Mercies and Goodness, for in our selves we can deserve nothing; Holy *David* himself confesses, he was but a Worm whereby he expressed the lowliness of his Mind, that he was not puffed up, though a King, with Pride and Vain-glory, but that he conceiv'd himself in Reason to deserve no more at the Hand of the Almighty than the meanest Insect; for indeed the greatest and most perfect Repentance, without God's Mercy interpose with his Justice, can avail us nothing; there is nothing in the best of Men that can either justifie or enable them to stand upright at the last Day; 'tis only God's Mercy in the Merits of his dear Son, that can render us able to look up when we come to give an

Account

Account of our Actions, for there is nothing can be hid from the Lord, who ſees our ſecret Thoughts, no place being able to obſcure us from the leaſt of Things. This Conſideration made holy *David* cry out, *I acknowledge my Sins, O Lord, and my Tranſgreſſions are ever before thee*: We little conſider how many Tears, Sighs and Groans it coſt this good Man upon every Failing; he knew that there is nothing ſo powerful as a broken and contrite Spirit, recommended in fervent Prayer; for God himſelf has declared he will not deſpiſe, it is an acceptable Sacrifice, as a ſweet ſmelling Savour it is in the Noſtrils of the Lord, who is gracious, and willeth not the Death of a poor Sinner, but is deſirous he ſhould rather repent and live.

God is indeed very gracious, but his Grace and Favour rarely extends in an extraordinary Manner to the ſtubborn and obſtinate Sinner; therefore holy *David* took better Meaſures to give Poſterity a Pattern how to act, in caſe, through Frailty, they fell into grievous Sins; therefore if we conſider *David*'s Miſcarriages, let it be to avoid them; if his Repentance, to imitate him therein, and be happy:

From

From theſe Paſſages, in the Life of this holy Man, we may draw Examples, and apply them to our ſelves.

Firſt, To learn to be contented in all States, Stations and Conditions of our Life.

Secondly, To be humble and patient under Afflictions, Loſſes, Croſſes, or any outward Calamity, and look upon them as ſent from, or permitted by God, to try and refine us from the Droſs of Sin and Senſuality, which too frequently flow from Proſperity

Thirdly, We muſt learn to ſet a Watch before our Mouths, to keep us from falling into great Sins, conſidering how many Sorrows and Tears they coſt this good Man, in which God for a Time ſuffered him to be overwelm'd.

Fourthly, We may learn not to deſpair of God's Mercy, but to be ſtedfaſt in our Faith and Reliance on him, who is able to ſave to the utmoſt.

Fifthly

Fifthly, We may know the Quiet of a good Conſcience, when the Clouds and Storms are over: And laſtly, learn to live well, that when this Life is ended, by imitating *David*'s Virtues and Repentance, have *David*'s Reward, which is, A Crown of Life and Immortality in the Higheſt Heavens. To which, God of his infinite Mercy bring us all, tthrough Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*